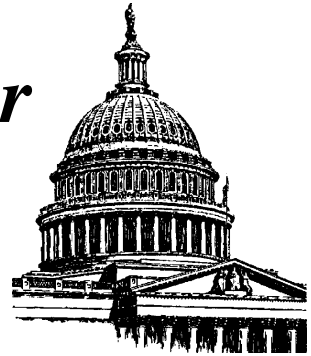


# Lynn Rivers' *Capitol Corner*

106th Congress, July Edition

A newsletter by Congresswoman Lynn N. Rivers representing Michigan's  
13th Congressional District



July 1999

Dear Friends,

*This month's newsletter focuses on cleaning up two very important issues in our country as we approach the new millenium. Campaign finance regulations are in serious need of reform, especially considering how quickly the 2000 elections are approaching. On the environmental front, requiring cleaner gasoline is an excellent way to improve air quality as more and more vehicles take the road.*

*If you would like to speak to me regarding these - or any others issues - please stop by one of my events in the 13th District. I look forward to seeing you there.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn".

Lynn N. Rivers

## Campaign Finance Reform At Last?

Although the 2000 federal elections are still over a year away, campaign preparations have already begun for many hopeful Congressional and Presidential candidates. Developing a platform and organizing strategy are certainly important parts of this process, but in far too many cases these concerns have become secondary to fund-raising activities.

Collecting money for political campaigns can be a perfectly honest and necessary part of becoming, or remaining an elected official - provided that it is done in an open and ethical manner. However, over the last several years, the growing prevalence of "soft money" and "issue advocacy" has compromised

*(Soft Money, page 2)*

## Clearing the air with cleaner gasoline

In recent years, attempts to reduce ozone depletion and air pollution have often focused on the millions of vehicles emitting hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, and other damaging elements into the atmosphere that we breath. Although improvements in exhaust technology and fuel efficiency have certainly slowed the effects of our massive fossil fuel consumption, a broader and more concerted effort will be needed to successfully address this economical and environmental challenge.

One possible approach that is now under consideration concentrates on the fuel being burned rather than the cars and trucks that are burning it. H.R. 888, the Clean Gasoline Act of 1999, would set new limits on the  
*(Clean Gas, page 3)*

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**(Soft Money, from cover)**

the election process by circumventing regulations designed to protect its integrity.

Visitors to my Washington, D.C. office are greeted by a poster hanging on the front desk which reads “Ban Soft Money Now!” This slogan frequently prompts the question “What is soft money, anyway?” After hearing the explanation, they often remark on the soundness of the idea.

“Soft money” refers to funds which are used in the service of federal campaigns, but which are not covered by federal election guidelines. Essentially, this type of fund-raising avoids regulatory limits by funneling money into state and local organizations who spend it in ways that are beneficial to federal candidates.

One of the most common uses for soft money is “issue advocacy,” a practice which escapes federal regulation due to a clever loophole. Campaign communications that explicitly advocate the election or defeat of a clearly defined federal candidate are covered by finance laws, and thereby subject to disclosure requirements. “Issue advocacy” avoids these restrictions by omitting such overt references, supposedly “educating the public” about a candidate’s views.

Soft money and issue advocacy are two extremely common ways of raising and spending money to influence federal election without government - and public - oversight. As their role in the election process increases, they continue to erode the integrity of the system, as well as the confidence of the American people in their government

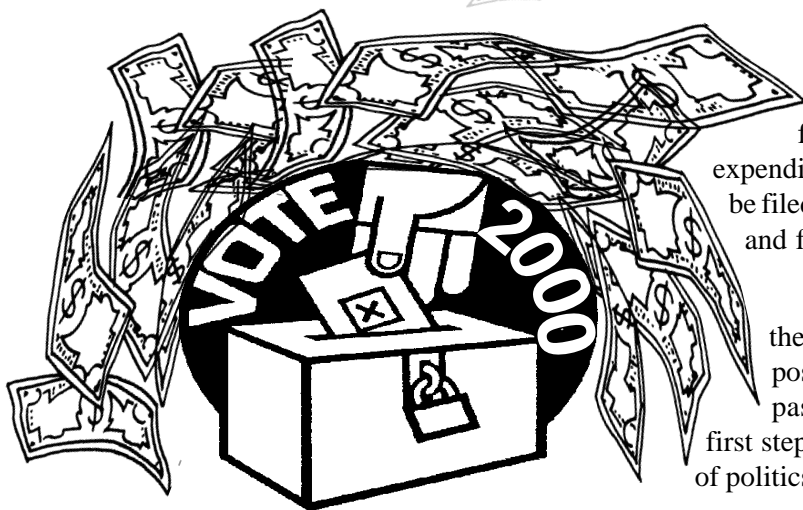
Fortunately, Congress has an excellent opportunity to restore the public’s trust in the political system with H.R. 417, also known as the Bipartisan Campaign Finance Reform Act of 1999.

H.R. 417 bans all national political parties from soliciting, receiving, or spending soft money. It also bans state and local parties from using soft money for federal election campaigns, except for voter identification and “get-out-the-vote” drives. The bill is written to ensure that the soft money system is abolished completely, and not simply relocated to the state level.

In addition, H.R. 417 also includes the following comprehensive definition for issue advocacy:

- 1) using explicit phrases, words or slogans that in context can have no other reasonable meaning than election advocacy
- 2) referring to a candidate in a paid radio or television advertisement that appears in the affected state within 60 days of the election
- 3) expressing unmistakable, unambiguous election advocacy, when taken as a whole and with limited reference to external events.

Under this bill, specified activities are prohibited from being funded by soft money, guaranteeing that they will be subject to federal limits and disclosures. H.R. 417 does exclude educational voters guides and records that cover at least two candidates and are not coordinated with a candidate or party.



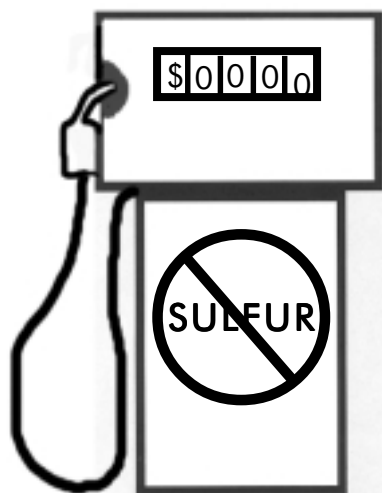
Finally, H.R. 417 provides for electronic filing of disclosures. Current law requires that all political parties and election committees file financial disclosure including all of their expenditures. This bill would require that disclosures be filed electronically which would allow voters easier and faster access to campaign spending records.

As many candidate are already preparing for the 2000 election, we still have time to make a positive impact on that campaign process. With the passage of H.R. 417, we can take an effective first step toward getting big special interest money out of politics and restoring the voice of average citizens.

**(Clean Gas, from cover)**

amount of sulfur present in motor vehicle gas - which in turn would produce significant air quality benefits.

Currently, gasoline sulfur levels in the U.S. (outside of California) are generally around 300 parts per million (ppm) per gallon, although they can reach concentrations as high as 1000 ppm per gallon. H.R. 888 sets a sulfur limit of 40 ppm per gallon, allowing concentrations between 40 and 80 ppm if the average concentration over a year stays below 30 ppm, and takes full effect four years after being enacted.



Reducing sulfur levels to this extent has been shown to produce direct improvements in vehicle emissions. A drop from 450 ppm to 40 ppm can decrease the emission of hydrocarbons by 18%, carbon monoxide by 19%, and nitrous oxide by 8%. This same reduction has even greater effect when applied to Low-Emission Vehicles and Ultra-Low-Emissions Vehicles, decreasing emissions of these same gases from 30 to 50%. In California, sulfur restrictions already in place have been credited with reducing ozone levels by as much as 12%.

The benefits of low sulfur gasoline also extend to the vehicles that burn it. High sulfur levels adversely affect catalytic converter functions, and can also cause impairment of the

advanced technology emission control systems now available in some states. In addition, high sulfur gasoline has prevented the introduction of new fuel-efficient technologies, such as direct injection engines and 'NOx trap' after-treatment technology, both of which require fuel with a very low concentration of sulfur.

The technology to reduce sulfur levels in gasoline is currently available, and has already been put to use in many industrial nations - and even in some developing ones as well. Implementing it here in the U.S. would be a smart and relatively painless way to make the air around us a little bit cleaner.

## Did You Know ...

... EMU's first principal later became a U.S. Senator from Florida ?

When Eastern Michigan University was founded in 1849, it was Michigan's first institution designated to educate teachers to serve in public schools.

Known until 1959 as the Michigan State Normal School, the original campus was home to a full range of students, from K - 12 to teachers in training.

Adoniyah Strong Welch, a graduate of the University of Michigan, served as the school's first principal from 1851 to 1865.

After moving to Florida in 1865, Welch was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1868. He declined renomination to become president of Iowa State Agricultural College.

Welch Hall - the oldest building on the EMU campus - was named in his honor.

## Lynn Rivers' Capitol Corner

If you would like to receive this monthly newsletter in the mail, please return the form below to:

Congresswoman Lynn Rivers  
301 W. Michigan Ave., Suite 400  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

(Mr./Mrs./Ms.)

Name

Address

City, Zip

**Lynn is hosting the following events:**



**Access  
Events**



**August:**

*Social Security Administration*

Wednesday, August 25, 1999  
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
Ypsilanti Township Civic Center  
7200 S. Huron River Dr., Ypsilanti



**own Halls**



**July:**

Thursday, July 8, 1999  
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm  
Maplewood Community Center  
31735 Maplewood, Garden City



**August:**

Thursday, August 19, 1999  
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm  
Wayne Senior Center  
35000 Sims, Wayne



**forums**



**August:**

*Immigration and Language  
Acquisition: A Nation Divided?*

Tuesday, August 10, 1999  
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Wayne County RESA  
Annex Bldg.  
33500 Van Born Rd., Wayne

*International Attempts to Protect the  
Environment: Can They Work?*

Monday, August 23, 1999  
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Washtenaw Community College  
Morris Lawrence Bldg. Room #101  
4800 E. Huron River Dr., Ann Arbor



**offee Hours:**



**July:**

Tuesday, July 6, 1999  
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm  
Pickle Barrel Inn  
10256 Willis Rd., Willis

Wednesday, July 7, 1999  
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm  
Waltz Inn  
28104 Mineral Springs Rd.  
New Boston

Friday, July 9, 1999  
8:30 am - 10:00 am  
Extreme Bean  
7660 N. Canton Center Rd.  
Canton

Friday, July 23, 1999  
8:30 am - 10:00 am  
Silverman's Restaurant  
36480 Plymouth Rd., Livonia



**August:**

Thursday, August 12, 1999  
8:30 am - 10:00 am  
Cafe Felix  
200 S. Main St., Ann Arbor

Friday, August 13, 1999  
8:30 am - 10:00 am  
Rebecca's on Center  
134 N. Center St., Northville

Monday, August 16, 1999  
8:30 am - 10:00 am  
Belleville Grille  
146 High St., Belleville

Tuesday, August 17, 1999  
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm  
Demeko's Seafood Restaurant  
303 S. Inkster Rd., Inkster

Thursday, August 26, 1999  
8:30 am - 10:00 am  
The Mudd House  
317 W. Cross St., Ypsilanti

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Washington, DC 20515-2213

*Official Business*

THIS MAILING WAS PREPARED, PUBLISHED, AND  
MAILED AT TAXPAYER EXPENSE

*Lynn N. Rivers*

M.C.  
Bulk Rate

**13th Congressional District Constituent**